

ST. MARK Listening Session – Clergy Abuse Open Forum

Sunday, September 16, 2018

Comments from Parishioners’ Words:

- Moment of reckoning has arrived
 - o my heart is broken
 - o lost respect for levels of clergy
 - o stop impeding government charges/criminal investigation
 - o church values money over justice
 - o clergy compromised – officials should resign
 - o Arlington Diocese misconduct investigation – Bishop should hold hearing sessions in each parish
 - o must engage in renewal

- Cover-ups are concern
 - o clergy made decisions to move those who have abused children
 - o mothers and fathers need to be part of decision-making
 - o create culture where decisions are made by people of parish – not just pastor

- Recognize this is painful for good priests
 - o just do not know who they are
 - o some have chosen good for priests, over good for children and families
 - o need action – look at gays, celibacy, women

- Difficult for me to see what happened to my classmates in Baltimore (PBS documentary); church cares more about babies in womb than after born

- Make records of priests available by Bishops
 - o does my money stay in this church? no money to Diocese until action is taken

- Here in the wake of great crimes
 - o pastor should say, “Not in my parish!” instead of “read the policy”
 - o pastor should reach out to young people, especially Altar Servers
 - o not sure this is important at *ST. MARK*, heard “get over it, we have a policy”
 - o need clear direction from pastor, young may have no reason to believe

- Many years ago, many of us took VIRTUS training, if we worked with children
 - o what are we teaching our children?
 - o need to make sure our children know they have rights, and what to do if anything happens

- Authoress Bella Dot
 - o communist to infiltrate church with pedophiles
 - o been happening to long
 - o seminary is where this happened – homosexual problem

- Being Gay is not the problem of the Catholic Church
- I am furious!
 - o comes from the top – Vatican – they have a good life
 - o money should be for the poor
 - o Bishops make decisions of where pedophiles should go
 - o action must be taken at top level
- I am a sinner – God is patient with me – he is not finished with me
 - o we need prayers, repentance, then action
 - o feel pain
 - o bad seed, but many live holy lives
 - o stop, pray, and ask Holy Spirit to guide us
 - o believe in judgment that we are all sinners
- Never been molested in many years of being a Catholic
 - o this is my church – I will not cut and run – will work with my church
 - o meeting #2 – ACTION
- Proud to be a Catholic
 - o felt bad for friends who were not Catholic
 - o no personal experience, but totally devastated by reports of priests abusing children
 - o would like to see more parents here today
 - o deep damage to children
 - o lost seminarians – priests – damaged as well
- Enraged and furious
 - o cover-up of magnitude hard to believe
 - o Bishops transferred priests who abused rather than holding accountable
 - o Horrible
- Teen-agers have great hypocrisy meters
 - o eyes glaze over when they see priests who have not been held accountable
 - o need to see personal accountability
- Session worth nothing if it does not go to Catholic Bishops’ Conference
- Anger and frustration, but Church moves at snail’s pace
 - o no power to do anything
 - o Pope in trouble – did he cover up?
 - o need Action from top
- Upset – no personal experience, but heart goes out to those involved
 - o this church is a breath of fresh air – ST. MARK
 - o wants Staff and Fr. Pat to listen to parishioners

“Peace be with you.”

“Do not be afraid.”

- other churches are different – rigid and not welcoming
- continue to be open – adhere to “What Would Jesus Do (WWJD)?”
- Afraid for this church
 - demographics – remember Watergate, cover-up and impeachment
 - cover-ups can be cancerous
 - need Action to prelude additional occurrence
- History with priests who damaged families and children
 - simply moved without recriminations
 - taints all back to St. Paul
 - church colludes
- We deserve an explanation as to how and why this happened
 - so it does not happen again
 - must understand past
- Feel sorry for good priests
 - throughout the world – would be outraged
 - what would I do to convince people that we are not involved
 - who can we/our children trust?
 - vetting to be a priest must be more sophisticated to avoid issues
 - we are in a deep hole – (Catholic Church)
- Cardinal Law
 - unless Pope removes most Bishops, we will see no change
 - meeting in February attended by perpetrators
 - must start again from scratch
- We have something here in this Parish
 - Catholic because Christ-centered *ST. MARK* exemplifies Christ-centered love/caring
 - truth will set us free – must come into light
 - hope we can all stay in the church, and make it the way Christ intended
- Many priests from home parish have been accused
 - parish not supportive/nothing talked about
 - *ST. MARK* different – people have faith here
 - some of our kids are vulnerable; our community needs to work to help them
- Came back to the faith focused on hypocrisy
 - eventually came back home
 - example of good people gave hope
 - being Catholic is not so easy; drop of poison ruins whole pot
 - but we are a body – not a pot – like a honey badger, we can eat cobra; laity is the blood of Christ

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“Do not be afraid.”

- we must be part of the cure; convince the world that priests are like Bishop Sheen
- As members of church, we should be a light
 - by shining our lights
 - challenge things that do not look right
 - open this up
 - we have responsibilities as body of Christ this is a start
 - priests are human – treat as such
- Owe faith to my mother
 - community of *ST. MARK* is a family
 - must solve problems
 - we can go forward – do not leave
 - help one another
- Grew up with priests and nuns
 - they were family
 - must hold priests accountable
 - listen – talk to children and grandchildren
 - we must be together on this
 - thanks to all
- Concern is, what to do?
 - how does what was heard here go up chain of command?
 - must extend thoughts to Bishops
 - universal problem
 - Catholic Church is a bureaucracy – needs to move forward
 - must communicate how important all of this is to all of us
 - not short-term problem – every state will be looking at this; may become financial problem
 - WHO DO I TRUST?
 - must solve problem – serious problem